*"Beware of envy because indeed envy destroys good deeds in the same manner as fire destroys wood."*

*Do not use the sharpness of your speech on the mother who taught you how to speak.*

*"Heaven is under the feet of one's mother."*

*"Cure your illness by giving charity, and remove troubles and mishaps by giving charitv.*

*O mankind! We have created you male and female and have made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another.*

*"Fear God in your treatment of these animals, who cannot speak."*

*"The right of your neighbor is that you guard him when he is absent, honor him when he is present, and aid him when he is*

*..as for the orphan, do not oppress*

# MORALS AND MANNERS



*Sakina Noor*

# Introduction and forward

The Quran is the literal word of God, which The Almighty God revealed to Prophet Muhammad(s) through the Angel Gabriel.

*"The revelation of The Book is from God, the all Mighty, the all Wise." (Qur'an 39:1)*

113 chapters in the Quran, begin with the words- **in the name of God-the compassionate, the merciful.** This kind and loving God has instructed his creation to also practice compassion and mercy in their daily lives.

Pre-Islamic Arabs were notorious for certain characteristics such as arrogance, boastfulness, and excessive love of plunder. There was no rule of law or central government to control or hold them to account. Wars were fought on the flimsiest of excuses, often leading to acts of horrific cruelty and massacre.

Pre-Islamic Arabia was a male-dominated society. Women had no status of any kind. They were treated like cattle. One of the most savage of customs of the Arabs was to bury their female infants alive.
It was in these times that God sent the Prophet Muhammad(s) to take these people from the

darkness of ignorance to the light of faith and moral excellence.

*He it is Who has raised among the Unschooled people a Messenger from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and wisdom, although they had been, before, in clear misguidance (Quran 62:2)*

The Prophet Muhammad(s) was born and brought up in a family of devout monotheists, who were descendants of the Prophet Abraham(s).

For forty years, before he proclaimed prophet hood, Prophet Muhammad(s) built a reputation amongst the people, as an exemplar of outstanding manners and etiquette.
In the following verses, God himself testifies to Prophet Muhammad's (s) character.
*And indeed you (Muhammad) possess a great character (Quran 68: 4)*

*Indeed, in the Messenger of God you have a good example to follow (Quran 32.21)*
These verses refer specifically to the qualities the prophet displayed when he was interacting with people, whether it was when standing up for the truth or practicing patience with the people, when

they insulted mocked and even threw stones at him. These are the qualities that made the Prophet a role model on how to interact successfully with others in a society.

In the holy Qur'an, God has addressed Prophet Muhammad (s) on his kind and gentle manner:

*'Thus it is due to the mercy from God that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you' (Quran3:159).*

A man, who spent ten years in the same city as the prophet, stated: "*Throughout my stay with the prophet Muhammad* (s)*, I never heard an indecent word from his lips and never found him rude to anyone. He spoke very politely. He was kind to everyone."*

There are many narrations testifying the behavior of the prophet. A few are presented below.

*The Holy Prophet spoke in short, meaningful sentences and never interrupted anybody's speech. (Excerpt from the book koh ul basar pg69)*

*He never spoke with a gloomy face, nor did he ever speak in a rough manner. The Holy Prophet would never permit anybody to backbite others*

*and said, "I want to meet people with a loving heart." (Excerpt from the book Bihar al Anwar vol16 pg226)*

The following is quoted from the book Sunan Nabi; *The Noble Prophet used to patch his own clothes, mend his sandals, milk his sheep, eat with the poor and sit on the ground. He was not ashamed to carry his own groceries and other items from the market to his family. He would shake hands with the rich and the poor alike and he would not take his hand back from the hand of the other person until that person himself withdrew his hand. He would greet anyone who came to him whether rich, poor, old or young. He would never look down on whatever he was offered, even if it was a dry date. He had few possessions, had a kind nature, was sociable, cheerful, always smiling but without laughing, always sad but without frowning, humble without losing self-respect, generous without being extravagant, softhearted, and merciful to every Muslim* (Sunan Nabi pp. 62 -63)

George Bernard Shaw writes: *He was by far the most remarkable man that ever-set foot on this earth. He preached a religion, founded a state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated*

*numerous social and political reforms, established a powerful and dynamic society to practice and represent his teachings and completely revolutionized the worlds of human thought and behavior for all times to come."* (The Genuine Islam, Vol. 1, 1936)

Another historian, Washington Irving writes:
*In his private dealings he (Muhammad(s) was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them and listened to their complaints.* Excerpt from book Mahomet and His Successors'

Professor Claude Cahen, professor of Islamic History at the Faculty of Arts in Strasbourg University has written:
*Historians now attribute to Muhammed many admirable qualities which made him very enthusiastic and dedicated in promoting good morals and intellectual values among the people with whom he lived. At the same time, he was able to adapt his Message according to the nature of the people and their traditions, understanding such traditions and arranging them in an appropriate way for the Message he brought to remain for all time. We must consider Muhammed with high esteem and respect because of the*

*divine revelation he received, his ability to give solutions for the problems of humanity as a whole and to overcome his own personal difficulties.*

Just like Jesus, who had twelve disciples, prophet Muhammad also had twelve **divinely appointed** successors called Imams, who God Appointed to continue to guide the generations that came after the prophet. This is also stated in *Genesis 17:20* ***And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.*** ***(Genesis** 17:20)*

The first successor was Ali **(s)**, who was also like the prophet, a descendant of Abraham **(s)**. Ali **(s)** was married to the Prophet's only daughter Fatima **(s)**.

The successors were called Imams. An Imam is one who guides the people by divine command.

Imam Ali **(s)** was the first Imam. After Ali **(s)** death, his eldest son Hassan **(s)** took over the mantle of imam and after him his younger brother Hussain**(s)**. The chain continued through successive generations of fathers who were succeeded by one of their sons, appointed by God. After Imam Hussain**(s)**, his son Ali ibn Hussain**(s)**

became imam. The succession continued as follows;
Imam Muhammad Baqir(s)
Imam Jaffer Al Sadiq(s)
Imam Musa Al Ridha (s)
Imam Muhammad Taqi(s)
Imam Muhammad Al Naqi(s)
Imam Hassan Al Askari(s)
and then to the 12th and final Imam, Muhammad Al Mahdi (s), who is currently in occultation.

God had chosen the members of this holy family to be his representatives on earth and hence purified them for this task. The following verse testifies to this.

*Indeed, God desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the (prophet's) Household, and purify you with a thorough purification. (Quran 33:33)*

The sacred message and its teachings had to be carried out by only these individuals as narrated by the prophet during his last days:

***I am leaving among you Two Weighty and important Things: The Book of God and my family. So long as you (simultaneously) adhere to both, you will never go astray.***

Unfortunately, history shows that many people chose to ignore this timeless advice.

In this book, we take a few of the many narrations and incidents from the lives of these purified individuals to serve as the finest examples of the moral and ethical teachings of the religion of Islam.

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# 1. ALTRUISM

*"They give preference to them over themselves - even though poverty may afflict them (Quran 59:9)."*

Prophet Muhammad (s) was the best example of altruism. He used to give priority to the poor even before himself. He used to give the poor his own meal, while he himself suffered hunger. He turned a community that was self-centered and selfish into altruistic and giving believers.

The Prophet (S) used to prefer the poor and needy to his own self. He used to give them his food while he suffered hunger to the degree that he, once, tied the stone of hunger on his stomach to share the pains of hunger with the poor.

"Since he was appointed a prophet, The Prophet (S) never ate to his fill for three consecutive days
Quoted from Imam Baqir (s) in the book Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 194

A story that has been narrated by many say that when they were young, the grandsons of the holy

prophet- Hassan (s) and Husain (s)fell sick, the prophet, suggested to the parents Ali (s) and Fatima(s) make a vow to God that they will fast for three days in a prayer for the recovery of their children.

When they were better, Ali(s) and Fatima (s)prepared to fulfill the vow. Hassan (s) and Husain (s) insisted to be included in the fast. Even their maid Fizza asked to join in.

There was just enough just enough barley in the house to support one meal a day for three days. Fatima (s) ground the barley into flour and apportioned five loaves of bread for each member of the family.

However, on each of the three days, when the family sat to break their fast, a hungry person called at their door. On the first day a beggar came asking for food, the next day an orphan knocked on the door saying he had not eaten for days and on the third day a captive asked for some food. Captives in those days were not housed in prisons.

However, each time, the big-hearted members of the house, including the maid, voluntarily and happily gave away their portion of the bread and all broke their fast with water. In praise of this

selfless act, God revealed the following verse of the Quran.

*They fulfill vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide. And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We only feed you for God's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks: (Quran, 76:7-12)*

In the book "know that I am Fatima Vol2, it is written that "On the eve of her wedding, Fatima (s) gave away her new wedding dress to a poor young woman who was wearing tattered clothes. The Prophet came home and found that she was not wearing her wedding dress. He asked why and she said, 'O father, a poor young woman knocked the door asking for a dress. I wanted to give her my old dress but then I remembered the verse.

*"You will not attain unto piety until you spend of that which you love." (Quran 3:92)*
Therefore, I gave her my new dress that I loved.

Another incident is that once, after the evening prayer in the mosque, a man stood up from the congregation and said: "I have not eaten in days!" Ali (s) stood up and volunteered to take the man to his home for a meal

When Ali (s) and the man reached home, Fatima (s) informed him that there was just enough food in the house to feed one person. To avoid the man being embarrassed Ali (s) put out the lamp and invited the man to the dinner mat and gave the man the food, as he himself pretended to eat. In the dark the man did not notice that Ali (s) did not eat.

# 2. ANIMAL RIGHTS

*And there is no animal that walks upon the earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings but (they are) communities like yourselves; We have not neglected anything in the Book, then to their Lord shall they be gathered. (Quran 6:38).*

Cruelty to animals is forbidden in Islam. As much as we treat our fellow humans with respect, we must also handle all other living things with kindness, especially those for whom we are responsible. God created animals to serve us and provide us with our various needs and we should be grateful for that and treat them well.

Prophet Muhammad (s) was kind to every living creature and this kindness knew no limits. Arabs, before the advent of Islam, were very cruel to their animals. It was common in Arabia to put a collar round the neck of a camel, but this practice was stopped on the Prophet's (s) orders.

Once the Prophet (s) was on a journey with his companions and stopped for rest at a certain place. A bird had laid an egg nearby. A companion took away the egg and the bird began beating her wings in a state of great distress. When the Prophet (s) found out, he asked the man to return the egg to the nest.

A man once came to Prophet Muhammad(S) carrying with him his belongings and a box. He said, "O Prophet! While I was passing through a jungle, I heard the voice of some bird's babies. I took them and put them in this box. The moment I did that, their mother came fluttering round my head."

The Prophet(S) said, "Put them down". When the man put the box on the ground, the mother of the young birds appeared flapping her wings. Seeing this, the Prophet(S) asked the man, who now had a look of surprise on his face, "Are you surprised by the affection of the mother towards her young? I swear by Him (God) who has sent me, surely, God is more loving to his creation than this mother is to these young birds. Return these baby birds to the place from where you took them, and let their mother be with them."

"Fear God with regard to animals", said the Prophet of Islam, "ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off their backs when they are tired; surely, there are rewards for being kind and gentle to animals, and for giving them water to drink."

Once the prophet(S) saw a camel that looked underfed and weak. He admonished the owner

saying, *"Fear God in your treatment of these animals, who cannot speak."*

At another time, the prophet(S) was walking when he saw a group of people torturing an animal with a hot iron. He told them to stop immediately and warned them that those who indulged such inhuman acts would attract the wrath of God

The prophet(S) always emphasized good treatment of animals by telling his companions the following story.

*"One day, a man was travelling in the desert. The heat was extreme, and he was very thirsty. Soon the man came across a well. He quickly drew up some water and drank it. Having quenched his thirst, he was about to walk away when he noticed a dog nearby who appeared parched.*

*The man drew up some more water and gave it to the dog to drink. In return for this one act one kindness, The prophet of his time received a revelation that God forgave all his sins!"*

Below are some of the rights that animals have over their owners according to Islam:

a) Animals should always be offered their own kind of food to eat and not be forced to eat what the owner is eating.

b) When travelling, if they reach a source of water, the owner should allow the animal to quench its thirst first.

c) When encouraging an animal to move, then one should not hit the animal on the face or head.

d) When riders stop to talk to each other, they should dismount and converse so that the animal is not tired by their weight.

e) Animals should not be forced to carry more than they can reasonably carry.

f) The owners should not make their animals walk on rough or uneven ground.

The prophet's successor Imam Ali has stated in a letter to his followers.

*"Do not separate the mother camel and her baby, and do not milk it to a maximum which would leave little milk for the camel's baby".*

## 3. CARING FOR ORPHANS

*And they ask you concerning the orphans Say: To set right for them (their affairs) is good*
*(Quran 2:220)*

*..as for the orphan, do not oppress (him).*
*(Quran 93:9)*

Islam gives a lot of importance to the welfare of orphans in society. To this effect, Prophet Muhammad has narrated:
*"If anyone from you becomes the guardian of an orphan and deals kindly with them, and he fulfills these actions satisfactorily, and he strokes the head of the orphan with sympathy, then God writes good deeds equivalent to the orphan's hair covered by his hand and forgives sins equal to the number of hair, and raises his position in grades which is equal to the hair of the orphan's head."*
*Excerpt from the book greater sins*

At the time of Prophet Muhammad, there were two brothers. One of the brothers, who had more property and wealth, passed away. The other brother claimed guardianship of his orphaned nephews and took his dead brother's property in his possession. When the orphans reached the age

of maturity, they asked for their father's property. Their uncle rejected their request and continued holding the property as his own. God revealed to the prophet the verse below:

*"And give the orphans their property, and do not exchange something bad (of yours) for something good (of theirs), nor devour their property along with your own; (for) it is surely a great crime." (Quran 4:2)*

When Prophet Muhammad(s) informed the brother of this verse, the brother understood what he had done. He immediately repented and returned the property to his nephews.

Historians have narrated that the Prophet's (s) successor Imam Ali(s) was very kind to children, especially to orphans. If he ever saw an orphan crying, he would stop whatever he was doing, wipe away the child's tears, and put his hand on the child's shoulder and say, "My child, why are you crying? Has someone hurt you? Come; let me take you to my house. Ali(s) would take the child home, give him food and sweets and treat him better than any father would.

During his lifetime, Imam Ali (s)attached great importance to orphans, and he used to take them under his care. He would say, 'I am the father of

the orphans. I must show compassion to them, so that they do not feel the absence of a father.'

Imam Ali (s) was struck with a poisonous sword when he was praying. Word reached the streets of the city that he needed milk to treat the the effects of poisoning. Many orphans, gathered around the house of Imam Ali (s) holding bowls of milk.

Ali(s) has also warned; *"Beware! Beware! Do not be neglectful of orphans. I warn you again, never leave an orphan hungry and unprotected."*

Prophet Muhammad's wife Khadija(s) was known as the "Mother of the Orphans" because of the way she cared for the orphans just like a mother would look after her own children.

A famous writer described Khadija's house as a sanctuary for every orphan who did not have anyone to depend on, every woman who was homeless and every parent who needed food for their children.

# 4. Envy

*…Or do they envy [other] people because of what God has given them of His bounty? (Qur'an, 4:54)*

Envy is one of the most destructive diseases of the spiritual heart. Envy gives way to additional vices such as backbiting, slandering, abuse, taunting, and torturing, all of which are grave sins. This hideous condition makes the human heart so narrow and gloomy that its effects consume one's inner and outer being.

The Quran mentions the first murder of humankind which occurred between Prophet Adam's two sons Habeel (Abel) and Qabeel (Kane) was due to envy. The verses are in the Quran- chapter 5; 27-31.

The Quran also mentions the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) (s) and dedicated a whole chapter to narrate his story which God has cited as "the best of stories", due to the richness in lessons of morality and ethics.

Prophet Yusuf (s) was thrown into the well by his elder brothers who were overcome with jealousy

when they perceived that Yusuf was specially loved by their father, Prophet Jacob (s)

Prophet Muhammad(s) has advised, *"Beware of envy because indeed envy destroys good deeds in the same manner as fire destroys wood."*
*(Excerpt from the book Ainul Hayat)*

The prophet's successor Imam Ali (s) said:
*"Envy is a great trap of Satan."*

God said to The Prophet:
***(O Muhammad!) Your Lord knows all of that what they have hidden in their hearts.***
***(Quran 16:74)***

In explaining the meaning of this verse, the Prophet said God knows the enmity and envy of the hypocrites against the prophet and his family.

Imam Ali(s) has said*: "The envious person looks like a loving friend by his speech, but hides malice behind his actions, he is friend only by name but by his characteristics, he is an enemy."*

Envy ruined Satan when he became envious on the status of Adam. It destroyed Cain when he became envious of his own brother Abel.

# 5. EQUAL TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

*"When they get tidings of a daughter their faces turn dark with shame; anger encompasses them and they hide their faces from others." (Qur'an, 16:58-59)*

The people of Arabia, before the advent of Islam, used to practice the abhorrent act of burying their daughters. This customary practice was either in fear of becoming impoverished by providing for them, since they were not regarded as a source of future income or suffering shame and ridicule from the society that they did not beget a son. Thus, poverty and pride both were responsible for this heinous crime. The Quranic verse above describes the state of mind of a man who hears of the birth of a daughter instead of a son.

The Quran also warns of the dire consequences of killing babies in these words concerning the Day of Judgment:

*And when the female infant is buried alive is questioned –for what crime was she killed (Quran 81:8-9)*

The Holy Prophet (s) vehemently opposed this horrible act and said that the birth of a girl is not a matter of humiliation to a family, but rather a source of great pride and honor.

On the day that his beloved daughter Fatima(s) was born, the prophet was waiting outside his house with a few companions. As soon as he was informed that his wife Khadija(s) had given birth to a baby girl, the prophet was overcome with immense joy as he immediately offered his thanks to God. But when the prophet(s) saw the faces of his companions he found them downcast. He was upset with them and said, "What has happened to you? God has blessed me with a flower, whose wonderful fragrance I smell. God has ensured sustenance for her too as He would for a son!"

The Prophet (s) has said: "*Anyone who brings up two daughters in a proper and kind manner, they will be very close to me on the day of Judgment".*

The Prophet's only child Fatima(s) grew up at a difficult time in her father's life. He had just declared his prophet hood and the people of Mecca were very hostile to the new faith. Fatima(s) witnessed the multitude of harassments and insults that the people of Mecca directed

towards her father. She was deeply affected by the persecution that her father had to endure.

There are many stories of how Fatima(s), even though a young child, would come to the defense of her father in the face of hostilities. Once, while her father was praying, someone threw filth on the prophet. Fatima(s) ran to her father and yelled at the men while wiping off the filth from her beloved father.

Whenever Fatima (s) would enter in his presence, her father, the prophet (s) would rise to his feet, kiss her hand and seat her where he was seated. And when prophet (s) came to see her, Fatima (s) would stand up, kiss his hand and seat him where she was seated.

The Prophet (s) adored his daughter so much that he stated:
*"Fatima is a part of me and whoever hurts her has hurt me and whoever hurts me has earned the wrath of God Almighty."*

The Prophet also narrated:
"*Whoever becomes the father of a girl; he should neither hurt her nor treat her with contempt nor show preference over her to his sons in kindness*

*and affection. Both boys and girls should be treated alike. God will grant him Paradise in return for kind treatment towards the daughter."*

After the death of her mother Khadija, Fatima(s) looked after her father, so sincerely that he used to call her "Umme Abiha", i.e. the mother of her father.

Prophet Muhammad (s) always spoke about justice and kindness towards a child whether it be a daughter or a son. Once a person in the presence of Prophet Muhammad(s) showed affection to his son and put him on his lap while ignoring his daughter who was with him. The Prophet (s) became upset and told the man that he was being unjust and that he should have also shown his daughter the same affection and placed his daughter on the other lap.

The Messenger of God(s) forbade Muslims from diversion of justice between children to prevent the sins of envy and other sins from polluting their lives. He said: *"Treat your children equally when giving them presents."*

From the book Nahj Fasahah p.366

# 6. GOOD CONDUCT

*Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded. (Quran 16:90)*

*And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands and do good (to others); surely Allah loves the doers of good. (Quran 2:195)*

Islam stresses on good conduct from the very core. Islam defines a true believer in the following narration;
*"Shall I not introduce 'a believer' to you? A believer is the one whom other believers trust with their souls and wealth. Shall I introduce 'a Muslim' to you? A Muslim is the one from whose hand and tongue others are safe....*
*Prophet Muhammad (s) (Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 235)*

Although he had come as a guide, mentor and teacher to the people, Prophet Muhammad *(s)* never created any barriers between himself and them. One would expect that being their leader, he had

every opportunity to keep himself aloof from the people and surround himself with guards and servants, but this was not in his character.

As the prophet of God preached equality to all, he also practiced it himself. When people would visit him, Prophet Muhammad *(s)* would sit with them and spend time talking to them not only about religion, but also about their daily lives, offering encouragement, sympathy and advice, he gained the love of the general public so much so, that they constantly turned to him for comfort. The prophet*(s)* lived a normal and simple life with dignity. The prophet *(s)* said;
"*we must treat others with the utmost respect and consideration and always be on the lookout to avoid hurting them in any way".*

Prophet Muhammad*(s)* always said:
*"The best of you is one who has the best morals."*

The Prophet(s) was known never to criticize or listen to criticism about people, as he did not want to be prejudiced against anyone.

## 7. HONESTY IN TRADE

*"Give full measure and weight with justice."*
*(Quran 6:152)*

*"Woe to the defrauders, who, when they take the measure (for themselves) from men, they take it fully. But when they measure out to others or weigh out for them, they give less". (Quran 83:1-3)*

The verses were revealed, as many of the inhabitants of Medina were tradesmen at that time. Most of them practiced dishonest in their practices of trade, particularly a trader by the name of Abu Jahinah who had two scales for measuring- one which he used when he wanted to buy from others and the other was for when he used to sell.

No trader or businessperson should allow greed to overcome his or her sense of well-being for the community.

Other verses from the Quran also mention about dealing fairly

*Give full measure and cause no loss ⌜to others⌝ Weigh with an even balance and do not defraud people of their property. Nor go about spreading corruption in the land. (Quran 26:181-183)*

The prophet's *(s)* grandson imam Jaffer Sadiq(s) once gave his assistant some money to trade on his behalf.

The assistant bought some merchandise and joined a trade caravan going to Egypt. On the way, they received word that the merchandise that they were carrying was in high demand in Egypt. The assistant and other traders made a pact among themselves not to sell their goods for less than 100% profit.

When the assistant returned to Medina, he went to imam Sadiq(s) and proudly presented the money to the imam. The Imam asked how he managed to double his investment. The assistant explained the pact of the 100% profit.

The face of Imam Sadiq(s) reflected anger as he separated the profit from his initial investment. He gave back the profit to the man saying, "I do not need the profit which is obtained by injustice.

Imam Ali(s) used to enter the markets, stand in the middle of the market, and call out:

*"O traders fear God". "Ask God for goodness, and be easy in your dealing with people, so you may be blessed. And approach the customers (in dealing), with patience Restrain from swearing;*

*and avoid telling lies. Stand against cruelty and treat the oppressed justly.*

*Do not approach usury. Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief."* *Narrated by imam Baqir(s)*

Hoarding of essential items like wheat, barley, rice during periods of scarcity with the intention of selling them at higher rates to people who are compelled to purchase them is considered one of the greater sins.

Prophet Muhammad(s)said that one who hoards food items for forty days in anticipation of rise in their prices has distanced himself from God and God tires of him and breaks off connection with him

# 8. Humility

*"The servants of the Merciful (God) are those who walk on the earth in humility." (Quran 25:63)*

Islam describes true humbleness as one who remembers God constantly, the one who continuously thanks Him for His countless blessings that has conferred upon him, and one who considers himself superior to no one.

The lives of the Holy Prophet**(s)** and his family were also based on these principles. They sat with the poor, shared their meals with them and treated them in a brotherly manner. The Holy Prophet**(s)** reprimanded the arrogant people and taught them the lesson of humility and politeness.

The prophet**(s)** and his family used to practice humility even when eating their meals. They would remove their shoes and sit on the ground with respect and eat their food with utmost humility. They would begin by taking God's name and end in giving the lord thanks for providing for them.

The humility of Prophet Muhammad(s) was so great that whenever he came to a gathering he never sat on a prominent place. He would sit on

the ground on the nearest vacant place he found. Whenever foreign representatives of countries brought some communication or wanted to meet the Holy Prophet (s) they had to ask, “Who among you is Muhammad?” They saw that there was no distinction at all; that here all were equal; there was nothing like protocol. All were sitting in a circle. Then the Holy Prophet used to reply, “Yes, I am Muhammad, how may I help you?”
(Excerpt from the book Hulyatul Abrar vol 1 pg. 117)

Once a poor man came to visit the Prophet and sat amongst a group. He happened to take a place near a rich man who made a face while moved his fine garment he was wearing, away from the poor man.

The Prophet(s) was not pleased by this action. The rich man saw the prophet’s expression and apologized, offering half of his wealth to the poor man in compensation.

The poor man accepted the rich man’s apology but rejected his money, saying "I fear that by becoming rich I too will behave the way this man did, so I do not want his money."

The prophet’s grandson imam Muhammad Baqir(s) would out of respect, spread his cloak out for the poor and needy to sit on when they visited him.

*Prophet Muhammad(s) has said:*
*"Indeed, the most beloved of you to me and the nearest of you to my position on the Day of Judgment are the best of you in nature and in humility; and the furthest of you from me are the pompous, that is the arrogant."*
*(Excerpt from the book living the right way)*

Imam Ali(s) advised a governor he had appointed:
*"Be humble to people, meet them gently and receive them with a cheerful face."*

A verse that quotes the advice of a wise man called Luqman to his son:

*And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster. And pursue the right course in your going about and lower your voice; surely, he most hateful of voices is braying of a donkey (Quran 31:18)*

Once a caravan travelling to the city of Mecca, stopped in the city of Medina to re-supply. After a few days, the caravan proceeded on their journey to Mecca.
On the way the caravan met up with a colleague. While greeting them, the colleague, noticed a person who was helping with the chores. When

the man looked closer, he immediately recognized the helper and asked his colleagues if they knew who he was. They replied in the negative, saying '*He joined us in Medina, but after these last few days of travelling together we can easily say that he is extremely pious, virtuous and God-fearing. We did not ask him, but he is always busy helping anyone who needs assistance in some way or the other.'*
The colleague replied '*I am sure you do not recognize him, for if you did, you would never allow him to do your petty chores.'*
The travelers, now confused, asked, '*who is he?'*
'*He is Ali ibn Husain(s) Prophet Muhammad's(s) grandson'*.

The entire caravan was overwhelmed with shame and regret for not enquiring who he was when he joined them. They rushed towards the Imam(s) to apologize for all menial tasks they made him do, saying, *'Why did you hide your identity? We could have committed an act of disrespect and never forgiven ourselves for it*.'

The Imam (s) replied, *'I intentionally joined your caravan because you did not know me. Whenever I travel with acquaintances, they treat me with great respect and affection because of my grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s), and do not permit me to do anything at all. I, therefore, try to accompany people who do not recognize me, so*

*that I can look after myself, do my own work, and without introducing myself, earn the pleasure of serving others.'*

In another incident, the Holy Prophet (s) and his companions were travelling and stopped at a desolate place to camp for the night. Everyone took a role in preparing the camp and cooking the evening meal

The Holy Prophet (s) said, '*I will collect the wood for the fire from the surrounding wilderness.'* All the companions cried in unison, '*Why must you work, with us around? We feel honored to serve you while you rest.*'

The Holy Prophet (s) replied. *God does not like anyone who considers himself better than his friends and worthy of their respect.'*

Saying this he walked towards the woods and returned with a pile of dry twigs and leaves enough to light the fire while the others finished their work.

# 9. JUSTICE FOR ALL

***O you who believe! Be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of God's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor,*** *(Quran 4:135)*

Imam Ali(s) once advised his son;
*"My son, make yourself the measure for dealings between you and others. Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself.*
*Do not oppress as you would not like to be oppressed. Do good to others just as you would like good to be done to you. Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Accept that from others, which you would like others to accept from you. Do not talk about what you do not know even though what you know be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you."*

The prophet's successor Imam Ali(s) was known as one of the best examples of Honesty and justice after the prophet, which is best demonstrated in the following incident.

A candle was burning by Ali's(s) desk, as he was counting and recording all the revenue and the expenses of the State Treasury. This was the time when he was the leader of the Muslim Nation.

Just then two men asked to speak to the imam. They made it known that they wanted to discuss some personal issues with Ali(s). As they sat down, Ali(s) extinguished the lamp he was using and asked that another lamp be brought from his house. The perplexed visitors asked why he did that.

Imam Ali(s) replied: *The oil in that lamp was bought using the public fund and it was not right to speak to you under its light as we are discussing personal matters.*

Another incident it is recorded that once Imam Ali's(s) brother Aqeel, requested more than his share from the Public Treasury. He reckoned his brother would be able to pull some strings. Ali (s) denied his brother's request, telling him he must be fair and just to all.

Ali(s) instructed his officers not to oppress the people. All his affairs were decided with justice and equity. The officer who committed even a bit of oppression or tyranny was removed from office immediately.

Michael Na'imah, a contemporary Lebanese Christian writer has this to say about Imam ali(s)

*"Ali was not only a champion on the battlefield but was also a hero in all other fields: in sincerity of heart, in purity of conscience, in the spellbinding magic of speech, in true humanitarianism, in the finnness and warmth of faith, in the height of tranquility, in readiness to help the oppressed and the wronged, and in total submission to truth wherever it may lie and whichever form it assumes. He was a hero in all these fields". [in the introduction to the book al-Imam 'Ali by George Jurdaq, also a Lebanese Christian]*

Ali(s) was so particular about imparting justice that his following statement has been immortalized.

*"Even if all the seven regions of the world and whatever is under the sky is offered to me so that I may disobey God and* ***take away unjustly the husk of barley from an ant I shall not do so.***

The United Nations has advised Arab countries to take Imam Ali(s) as an example in establishing a government based on justice and democracy and encouraging knowledge.

The United Nations Development Program in its 2002 Arab Human Development Report, distributed around the world, listed six maxims of Imam Ali(s) about an ideal and just governance, which are as follows:

*1. He who has appointed himself an Imam (ruler) of the people must begin by teaching himself before teaching others, his teaching of others must be first by setting an example rather than with words, for he who begins by teaching and educating himself is more worthy of respect than he who teaches and educates others.*

*2. Your concern with developing the land should be greater than your concern with collecting taxes, for the latter can only be obtained by developing; whereas he who seeks revenue without development destroys the country and the people.*

3. *Seek the company of the learned and the wise in search of solving the problems of your country and the righteousness of your people.*

*4. No good can come in keeping silent or in speaking out of ignorance.*

5. *The righteous are men of virtue, whose logic is straightforward, whose dress is* not *designed to*

*impress, whose path is modest, whose actions are many and who is undeterred by difficulties.*

6. *Choose the best among your people to administer justice among them. Choose someone who does not easily give up, who is unruffled by enmities, someone who will not persist in wrongdoing, who will not hesitate to pursue right once he knows it, someone whose heart knows no greed, who will not be satisfied with a minimum of explanation without seeking the maximum of understanding.*

# 10. LOOK AFTER THE NEEDY

*And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the traveler, and do not squander wastefully. (Quran17:26)*

The Quran highlights the rights of relatives and the needy as well as the traveler and the issue of spending one's wealth without extravagance.

The prophet's successor Imam Ali (s) spent all that he earned to help the poor and the needy, while he lived in the simplest manner. 'Ali (s) would go to villages and dig wells, plant trees and cultivate fields. However, all the fields that he cultivated or wells that he dug, he gave it as a gift whose income should be a source of income to the poor. His endowments were known as the "alms of Ali".

Another great personality, lady Khadijah (s), the wife of the holy prophet Muhammad (s), never closed the doors of her house to any poor person. She was always ready to assist a poor person who knocked on her door. She could not bear the thought of any needy person leaving her house empty handed. Lady Khadijah (s) paid special attention to the orphans and widows. That is why her house was called "The house of hope and security. She was also known as the "Mother of the Orphans".

The prophet's daughter Fatima *(s)* used to mill barley and wheat for the poor people of Medina who had no querns of their own. Fatimah (s) often carried water for her neighbors who were too old or disabled. She would fetch water from wells and carried it to them until her back was adversely affected. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.43 p.82

Imam Jaffer Sadiq *(s)* has said;
*"Cure your illness by giving charity, and remove troubles and mishaps by giving charity, and increase sustenance with charity. Charity removes evil from you. When you give charity, it goes unto the hand of GOD before it goes unto the hand of the needy"*

When Ali(s) became the leader of the Muslim nation, he was very just and kind to his people. He never favored anyone, and he lived like the poorest of them. He wore patched clothes and ate very simple food and slept very little. Ali(s) never allowed his clothes, food or lifestyle to be better than that of the poorest of his subjects.
*a closer look at Islam*

Ali(s) would never let money accumulate in the government treasury as he would immediately distribute it to the poor and needy.

Imam Ali(s) used had a garden of date palms. He used to sell the harvests of his garden to use the money for charity. The poor of Medina often surrounded him in the mosque. He divided the whole money amongst them, leaving him empty handed.

It has been narrated by a famous man of his time called, Ibn Abi Rafe', that he went to Imam Ali(s) on the day of Eid. He saw a bag being brought before the Imam(s), Ibn Rafe thought it would be jewels or an expensive gift. The Imam(s) opened the bag, it contained dried pieces of bread, which he softened with water. Ibn Abi Rafe asked him why would he seal such food that nobody would even care to steal. The Imam(s) smiled and said: "I keep it sealed because my children try to substitute softer bread, containing oil or butter in it." Ibn Abi Rafe said, "Has God prohibited you from eating better food?" He replied: "No, but I want to eat the kind of food which the poorest of this region can afford at least once a day. I shall improve the food I eat after I have improved their standard of life. I want to live, feel and suffer like them."

One day Imam Ali(s) saw an old woman carrying a heavy load of firewood which she could hardly lift, she was tottering under the weight. The Imam(s) relieved her of her load and carried it to her house.

It was after Imam Ali's(s) death only that people came to know that he had provided a shelter to a leper in an advanced stage of the disease.

The leper's shelter was outside the town. Imam Ali(s) used to go the shelter daily, dress his wounds, feed him with his own hands (because the leper had lost his hands), wash him, put his bed in order and carry him out of the shelter for a little while so that he may get fresh air.

Some people were passing by the leper's shelter and the leper inquired from them the whereabouts of Ali (s). He was informed of the imam's death as they had just then buried him. The news so affected the leper that he collapsed and died.

When Imam Ali(s) became the ruler, he asked his sons to prepare a list of all the deprived people, the poor, the destitute, widow and orphans of the city of Kufa, where he lived. Using this list, the Imam(s) used to personally load loaves of bread and dates and deliver them to the poor and needy.

Once Imam Hasan(s) learnt that the son of a widow in the neighborhood was ill. He went to visit the child. The widow lamented that there no one who could help her in the illness of her child. The Imam(s) said, "Do not worry, I am there to render all help." Thus, thvisited them in the morning and the evening and fulfilled all their needs. He used

to sit near the sick boy, massage him and speak to him words of comfort and assurance. The Imam also provided him with whatever he desired to eat.

In spite of the financial hardships that Imam Ali Ibn Hussain(s), he would regularly assisted the poor people of Medina. He used to load sacks of leavened bread on his shoulders and distribute it to the doors of the needy. The people did not know who used to distribute it. When the Imam (s) passed away the people realized that the one who used to supply them food keeping his face covered was the Imam (s)). It is said that when the funeral bath was being administered to the Imam a dark bruise was seen on his back. Someone asked what it was and a person from his family replied that it was due to carrying sacks of flour at night to the needy people's houses.

# 11. PREJUDICE&RACISM

*O mankind! We have created you male and female and have made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. The noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most righteous… (Qur'an, 49:13)*

God does not tolerate any form of superiority that one experiences over another. The best example is Satan being dispelled from God's kingdom due to his arrogance and pride over Adam:
*(Satan)] said: "I am better than he, you created me from fire, and you created him (man) from clay." (God) said: "Then get out from here, for verily, you are outcast." (Qur'an Chapter 38: 76-77).*

Islam abhors any form of racism. This can be beautifully exemplified when Muslims of all races, status and color stand shoulder to shoulder in the congregational prayers.

In a speech, the prophet Muhammad (s) declared: "All humans are descended from Adam and Eve, There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a non-Arab over an Arab, and no superiority of a white person over a black person or of a black person over a white

person, except on the basis of personal piety and righteousness."

Prophet Muhammad(s) showed special affection for Salman Farsi who was a Persian and Bilal, a former Ethiopian slave. The prophet appointed Bilal as the caller/announcer of the daily prayers, much to the displeasure of his enemies most of whom were racists.

The Prophet said: "*Whosoever possesses in his heart prejudice in any of its forms such as tribalism, racism, even to the extent of a mustard seed, God will not raise him on the Day of Resurrection as a believer.* *al-Kafi, vol. 2 saying no.3*

Imam Ali(s), in his letter to Malik al-Ashtar on appointing him as the governor of Egypt, wrote: "

*Remember, Malik, that among your subjects there are two kinds of people****: those who are your brothers in faith or those who are your equals in humanity.*** *Hence let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue... (*Nahjul Balagha*, Sermon #53)*

# 12. RENDERING TRUST

*Surely God commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge between people you judge with justice; surely God admonishes you with what is excellent; surely God is all Seeing, Hearing. (Quran 4:58)*

Trustworthiness is an Islamic and humanistic moral virtue that emerges from a mutual trust between the owner of the trust and the one entrusted with it who will promise that he will keep it and won't betray it.

During the first forty years of his life, before Prophet Muhammad(s) had proclaimed prophet hood, his reputation amongst the people far and wide was well known. The people recognized his sincerity, honesty and his brilliant manners. It became such that everyone referred to him as *al-Amin* (the honest) and *al-Sadiq* (the truthful).

After he proclaimed his prophet hood, some people accepted Islam based on the morals and ethics of this great prophet. However even those who stubbornly resisted still trusted the prophet so much, that they continued to deposit their

valuables with him for safe keeping when they were travelling. Visitors coming into the city of Mecca used to put their belongings in the safe custody of the Holy Prophet(s). When the Prophet had to leave Mecca and migrated to Madina he gave all the items that were in his custody, to his successor Imam Ali(s) and said:

"*Proclaim loudly, every morning and evening in Mecca that whoever had kept anything with Muhammad, may collect it."*

Imam Ali (s) said: *The best act of belief is trustworthiness while the worst of morals is betrayal.*

The Prophet's grandson Imam Al-Baqir (s) said: *"There are three things which God, the Mighty and the Glorious has not permitted anyone to abandon: returning a trust to its owner, irrespective of whether he is a good person or an evil one; fulfilling one's promises and covenants, irrespective of whether it has been made to a good person or an evil one; being good and kind towards one's parents, irrespective of whether they are good or evil."*

## 13. RESPECT FOR PARENTS

All religions and all societies have given parents an honorable status. We find ourselves indebted to our parents, particularly our mothers.

Our dear mothers, not only nourished us in her womb but went through pain and suffering to give birth and nurture us. She loved us even before we were born. She toiled when we were totally helpless infants. She spent sleepless nights caring for us. Our parents, as a team provided for all our needs.

Islam takes immense importance in the respect and care of parents. God has referenced parents least 15 times in the Holy Qur'an. Two verses are given below:

*"We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents; in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth." (Quran 46:15)*

*And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word.*

*And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion and say: O my Lord have compassion on them, just as they brought me up (when I was) little. (Quran 17:23-24)*

*Prophet Muhammad* (s)*, stressing on the importance of a mother,* has said "*Heaven is under the feet of one's mother."*

While Imam Ali (s) has said:
*Do not use the sharpness of your speech on the mother who taught you how to speak.*

The prophet's grandson, Imam Ali Ibn Hussain (s) in his compilation of the treatise of rights, has said the following.

*The right of your mother is that you know that she carried you where no one carries anyone, she gave to you of the fruit of her heart that which no one gives to anyone, and she protected you with all her organs. She did not care if she went hungry as long as you ate, if she was thirsty as long as you drank, if she was naked as long as you were clothed, if she was in the sun as long as you were in the shade. She gave up sleep for your sake; she protected you from heat and cold, all in order that you might belong to her. You will not*

*be able to show her gratitude, unless through God's help and giving success.*

***The psalms of Islam (sahifa al sajiddiya) by Ali ibn Hussain***

Once, while conversing with God, Prophet Moses(s) asked: "O' Lord! I desire to meet the person, who is to be my neighbor in heaven."

God informed him that his neighbor was a butcher living in an adjacent town. Moses Moses(s), intrigued on why a mere butcher would be so important, set out in search of this butcher and eventually found him, at his place of business. Moses (s) found the butcher spent his day busy selling meat with no indication of any extra ordinary behavior.

When night fell, Moses (s) approached the butcher and introduced himself as a traveler looking for lodging for the night. The butcher, unaware of that he was talking to a prophet, invited Moses (s) to his house.

At home, the butcher began to prepare for the evening meal. After that, he served the food to Moses(s) and excused himself. Moses watched as the butcher climbed up a loft and gently bring down a large basket. In the basket was an old and frail woman.

The butcher fed and washed the woman and then carried her back to the loft. Moses(s) noticed the

old lady's lips move as she mumbled to the butcher.

Moses (s) inquired, "Who is this lady?"

The butcher replied, "She is my mother who is unable to look after herself, so i try to serve and look after her."

Moses(s) questioned further, "What did your mother whisper before you took her upstairs?"

He responded, she prays for me- *may God forgive you and place you in the company of Prophet Moses in Paradise."*

Hearing this, Moses(s) smiled and said, "God has accepted your mother's prayers."

A young man was on his deathbed when the Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) came and sat near him. The prophet noticed that the youth was in discomfort and asked him to recite a prayer. However, the youth could not respond. The prophet(s) enquired if his mother was present? A woman responded, "Yes, I am his mother."

The Holy Prophet(s) asked "Are you displeased with him?"

'Yes, O Prophet, we have not spoken to each other for almost six years.'

The Holy Prophet (s) asked the mother to forgive her son. The mother immediately said out loud

that she had forgiven her son, after which her son began reciting the prayer and passed away peacefully.

Once a person asked prophet Muhammad(s): "What are the rights of the father upon the son?" The Noble Prophet(s) replied:

"He should not call his father by name, he should not walk ahead of him, he should not sit until his father has seated himself and he should not do such acts as a result of which people abuse his father."

Narrated by Imam Al Ridha from the book Biharul Anwar, Volume 74, Page 45

Imam as-Sadiq (s) has said

"Do not cast your gaze upon your parents, except with love and compassion; do not raise your voice above theirs; do not raise your hands above theirs; do not walk ahead of them."

Extracted from the book Biharul Anwar, Volume 74, Page 79

## 14. RESPECT OF NON-MUSLIMS

*God does not forbid you from respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely God loves the doers of justice.* *(Quran 60:8)*

Because Prophet Muhammad (s) was spreading the word of God, changing the lives of many, some people in Mecca who were still worshipping idols, harassed the prophet in many ways by throwing stones or rubbish at him .

One old woman made a habit of throwing rubbish on Prophet Muhammad (s), from her balcony, whenever he passed through the Alley which was the way to his house. This was a regular event. However, the prophet (s) would pass silently without showing any anger or annoyance.

This continued for a while after which it suddenly stopped. The prophet(s) inquired from a neighbor, who informed him that the old woman was taken ill. Immediately, the prophet (s) went to her house and requested if he could meet the old woman. The old woman became scared that prophet Muhammad (s) had come to take his revenge when

her defenses were down, but the Prophet (s) assured her that he had come to ask about her condition and look after her needs. The Prophet (s) sat by her side and prayed for her. The prophet (s) visited her until she was well again.

It has been narrated that during the rule of Imam Ali (s), he saw an old blind man begging on the streets. He was shocked, asking why a beggar was on the streets under his government.

One man commented that he was a Christian, where upon Ali (s) admonished the man saying:

*"When this man was strong, you used his strength for your benefit, now that he is old and weak, you have left him alone? Where is the sense of justice and compassion?"*

Ali thereafter instructed that the old man be given a regular pension from the public treasury.
(Excerpt from the book*Wasa'il al-Shia*)

Yet another story has been narrated that one day outside the city of Kufa, two men, a Muslim and a Christian met on the road. The Muslim was going to Kufa while the Christian man was travelling further on. Since a part of their journey was common, they decided to travel together.
The two men conversed as they walked along until the Christian man realized that the road to Kufa had passed but the Muslim man had not

taken that road, instead was continuing to accompany him. On inquiring why he did not, the Muslim replied *"my prophet has said, 'whenever two persons are travelling together on the same path, they establish reciprocal rights upon each other'. Now you have got a right upon me and for the sake of that right I wish to walk a few steps with you, and then, of course, I shall return unto my own path."* The Muslim was none other than Imam Ali(s)

Historian Professor M.G Reynolds writes in his book that; *"Ali was so popular even among the non-Muslims that when he died, all the Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians of Kufa, particularly their women and children who were personally looked after by Ali(s), lamented his death and wept as one does for one's father. Mourning was observed even in Jerusalem and the Lord Bishop also could not restrain his tears."*
*(Prof. M. G. Reynold's Book on Islam, Chapter 3.)*

# 15. RESTRAINING ANGER

*..and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men; and God loves the doers of good (to others).*
*(Quran 3:134)*

A traveler once arrived in Medina and came to the Prophet Muhammad(s) seeking some advice. The holy Prophet(s) advised him in just one sentence: "Control your anger."
When the man returned home, he found his tribe under siege as one of his tribesman had stolen some items from a neighboring tribe, who had retaliated.

Instinctively the man prepared himself to defend his tribe, not caring who was at fault. Suddenly he recalled the advice from the Holy Prophet to control his anger, prompting him to reflect on what he was about to do.

The man went forward and addressed the leaders of the opposite side: "Brothers, what is this war for? If my people have stolen your property, can we not sit together and resolve the problem?

The leaders from the opposite side felt totally disarmed by this new approach. They soon realized that bloodshed was not the answer and decided to sit down and reconcile.

Another incident occurred a few years after the prophet passed away. Syria was governed by those who wanted to take over the Muslim leadership and had put out false propaganda to discredit the prophet's family, particularly imam Ali(s).

A man, who had been brainwashed by these lies, was visiting the city of Medina. The Syrian met up with Imam Hassan (s), the Prophet's grandson and immediately started to hurl abuse insult Hassan(s) and his father Ali(s)

Hassan (s) controlled his anger and instead of reacting in a like manner, greeted the Syrian cordially asking if he was tired from the long journey and inviting him to his house to rest.

The Syrian, taken aback with the impeccable manners of Hassan (s), declined the invitation initially, but finally agreed. After the Syrian sampled the genuine hospitality and kindness of the prophet's grandson, realized that he was misled and apologized for his outburst.

The Holy Prophet(s) has commanded, *"If one of you finds some of this [anger] in himself, if he is standing, he should sit, and if he is sitting, he should lie down. If he is still angry, he should perform ablution (ritual purification) with cold*

*water or take a bath, for fire can only be extinguished with water."*

Prophet Muhammad(s) advised some people who were wrestling: *"He is not strong and powerful who wrestles and throws people down, but he is strong who withholds himself from anger."*

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (s) has said:
*"Anger is the key (that opens the door) to all kinds of vices.*

Imam Musa al-Kadhim(s) is the best example of one who swallowed and restrained his anger. The Imam (s) was imprisoned and tortured by the ruling oppressors of his time, just because he was loved and admired by the people.

When the soldiers of the tyrant Harun arrested him for no offense other than being more loved by the people, the Imam(s) neither uttered a word of complain against the oppressors nor a single word of disrespect. The Imam(s) was eventually poisoned, passing away in prison. He controlled his anger and bore his troubles with extreme patience.

## 16. RIGHTS OF NEIGHBORS

*heaven..and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor further away (Quran 4:36)*

Islam has great respect for the mutual rights and duties of neighbors. Not only next-door neighbors but neighbors further away. In fact, Islam considers neighbors as those who reside **forty houses** on each side of a Muslim's house. A neighbor may also be one's colleague at work or a college roommate or a fellow rider in mass transport e.g., bus, train etc.

Prophet Muhammad (s), commenting on the rights of the neighbor has said:
*"It is to help him if he asks your help, to lend him if he asks to borrow from you, to satisfy his needs if he becomes poor, to console him if he is visited by an affliction, to congratulate him if is met with good fortune, to visit him if he becomes ill, to attend his funeral if he dies, not to make your house higher than his without his consent lest you deny him the breeze of air, to offer him fruit when you buy some or to take it to your home secretly if*

*you do not give him, nor to send out your children with it (fruit) so as not to upset his children, nor to bother him by the tempting smell of your food unless you send him some."*

*The Scale of Wisdom, P.234/235*

The prophet's grandson Imam Ali Ibn Hussain (s) has also narrated in his works that;

*"The right of your neighbor is that you guard him when he is absent, honor him when he is present, and aid him when he is wronged. You do not pursue anything of his that is shameful; if you know of any evil from him, you conceal it. If you know that he will accept your counsel, you counsel him in that which is between him and you. You do not forsake him in difficulty, you release him from his stumble, you forgive his sin, and you associate with him generously. And there is no strength save in God."*

***The psalms of Islam (sahifa al sajiddiya) by the `Ali ibn al-Husayn*(s)**

The prophet(s) also said that:

*"Whoever believes in God and in the Day of Resurrection must respect his neighbors. The right of neighbors upon a person is like the right of a mother upon her children."*

Imam Hassan (s) narrated:
*I saw my mother [Fatima] standing in prayer. She was continuously kneeling and performing prostrations till dawn broke. I would hear her pray for the health and welfare for all her neighbors, but she did not at all pray for herself. I said, 'mother why did you not pray for yourself like you prayed for others?' so she replied, 'Oh my son, first remember the neighbor and thereafter your own house.'*

Prophet Muhammad(s) was told of a woman who prayed and fasted a lot and gave donations generously, but whose neighbors complained of her abusive tongue. He said that God would not be pleased with her. On the other end When the Prophet was told of another woman who did not do all those extra acts of worship other than the five daily prayers, but was a kind person, whose neighbors were happy with her, he said that she would be rewarded by God.

In the book Bihar al Anwar vol. 43, it is written that the prophet's daughter Fatima (s) often carried water for her neighbors who were too weak or old. She filled the water skin from wells and carried the heavy load to their houses.

A sick person is depressed and worried. The sick need kindness and mental support because they feel useless, disabled and in many cases have lost hope. It happens that in such circumstances, visits by family, friends give great encouragement to the sick, giving them comfort and mental satisfaction.

In view of this Islam recommends that the sick should be visited and asking about their health should not be ignored.

The holy Prophet Muhammad(s) says "Every Muslim who visits a sick person is absorbed in God's blessings and during the time that he spends with the sick person, he is under divine mercy.

Imam Ali (s) used to visit the sick and encouraged his companions to do so. Once, he said to them, whoever visits his ailing brother, it is as if he is walking under the trees of Paradise. And if he sits with him, God’s mercy will envelope him.

One day Imam Jafar al-Sadiq(s) met some of his companions on the way; he asked them: "Where are you going?" They said: "We are going to visit a sick fellow." He asked them: " Are anyone of you taking an apple, Quince fruit, or perfume for the sick?" They answered in the negative." Then the imam said: "Did you not know that the sick person feels at ease when something is brought to him."

Once a man fell ill and Imam Husain (s) paid him a visit. As the Imam sat by the sick man, he noticed the man to be in a state of extreme, repeatedly moaning and exhibiting great anguish.

The Imam(s) said to him, “Brother, what causes you to be so disturbed and worried?”

“I am burdened by a debt of sixty thousand dinars.” he replied.

The Imam (s) consoled him by saying, “I take the responsibility of clearing your debt.”

The man persisted, “I fear I may die before my debt is repaid.”

The Imam(s) said, “Do not worry! I shall clear your debt before your death.” Having said this, Imam Husain(s) arranged the man’s debt to be paid off.

# 17.HYGIENE

*"Truly, God loves those who turn to Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves."* *(Quran 2:222)*

One of the most important things stressed by Islam is hygiene.

Prophet Muhammad(s) has always taught that a Muslim's house has to be kept clean. The courtyard and doors must be clean and pure. The clothes and linen must be kept clean and pure.

The most basic principles of personal hygiene in Islam includes *wuduu*, which is necessary before each of the daily five prayers. *Wuduu* includes washing the hands, rinsing the mouth and nose, washing the face, washing the arms from the elbows to the tips of the fingers

Prophet Muhammad(s) was fond of perfume and spent money more on buying perfumes than on food. His pleasant smell filled the air of any place he passed, so that whosoever passed there knew that the Holy Prophet(s) had passed that way. The Prophet (s) used to brush his teeth frequently and washed his blessed hands both before and after meals. Whenever the Holy Prophet of Islam was

about to leave his house, he would look into a mirror or into a pool of water; he always left home with a clean, pleasant appearance.
***Safinat, Vol. 1, p.419.***

The Holy Prophet (s) loved perfume and disliked foul odors. ***Ihya 'Ulum al-Din 2:358***

The Holy Prophet (s) would brush his teeth thrice every night. Once before sleeping, once when he woke up for the nightly worship and once before leaving for the morning prayer. ***Makarim al-Akhlaq: pg. 39***

It is narrated from Imam Jafar Sadiq(s) that decency and cleanliness in one's clothing are highly endearing to God and those who practice otherwise, displease the Almighty. He likes His creatures to be properly dressed and perfumed and to keep their houses clean and turn on the lights before sunset.

Imam Ali al-Rida (s) says, "Good hygiene is from the ethics of the prophets."

## 18.THE IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS

A man named Hammam once asked Imam Ali (s). to describe the qualities of a pious person. Here below are some of the qualities that the Imam mentioned.

*They always speak truthfully, rightly and to the point*

*Their way of living is based upon moderation, and their mode of dealing with others is founded on good will, and courtesy.*

*They avoid things prohibited by God. They concentrate their minds upon knowledge of things which will bring them eternal bliss.*

*They bear hardships and sufferings as happily as they enjoy comforts and pleasures.*

*Nothing in this world alarms, frightens or awes them. Everything other than His might appears to them as insignificant and humble.*

*They harm nobody.*

*They do not indulge in excessive eating and pleasure seeking.*

*Their wants are limited. Their wishes are few.*

*They accept with patience, any sufferings that they have to endure*

*They spend their nights or free time, carefully studying the Quran, because, of their weaknesses and short-comings, and try to find ways from this holy book on how to improve themselves*

*They also spend their Nights praying before the Lord*

*Their days are spent with such works that clearly indicate their wisdom, depth of knowledge, virtuousness, and piety.*

*They constantly fast and have a simple diet*

*They do not like to be complimented or praised as they are afraid that such praise may lead them to arrogance, self-flattery, and self-glorification.*

*They are resolute, though tender-hearted and kind.*

*They are unwavering in convictions and beliefs. They are thirsty for knowledge.*

*They forgive those who have harmed them*

*Even when owning wealth Their way of life is*

*based upon moderation.*

*Their prayers are models of humility and submissiveness to God.*

*Even when starving they will maintain self-respect.*

*They bear sufferings patiently."*

*"They resort only to honest means of living.*

*Leading others towards truth and justice, gives them pleasure.*

*They despise materialism and greed.*

*Though they do good deeds all the time, yet they feel anxious of their shortcomings.*

*Every night, they thank God for having passed one more day under His Grace and Mercy.*

*Every morning finds them starting the day with the prayers of the Lord, happy with the thought the Lord has blessed another day to do their duty."*

*Worldly pleasures do not interest them.*

*Their wisdom is mixed with patience.*

*They are courteous to others.*

*They possess a contended mind, eat moderately,*

*They do not harm anybody.*

*They are easy to be pleased.*

*They are strong in faith*

*Their temper is controlled."*

*"People expect good out of them and consider themselves immune from any harm.*

*They forgive those who want to harm them*

*They help those who have refused to help them in the past and kind to those who have been cruel.*

*They do good to those who do evil to them*

*They never indulge in loose talks.*

*They have no vice in them, and their good qualities are outstanding, noticeable, and prominent.*

*When facing dangers, they are calm and undisturbed.*

*They are patient and hopeful during times of sufferings*

*They never misappropriate anything entrusted to them.*

*They do not slander anybody.*

*They do not harm their neighbors.*

*The above can be considered the gold standard not only for every Muslim, but every human being to instill in themselves.*

# FURTHER READING

The above information is just a brief insight into the moral teachings of Islam. For further information and more in depth detail, we recommend the below listed books and websites:

1.A Restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims by Sayyid Ali Ashgar Razwy
Available online at https://www.al-islam.org.

2. Nahjul Balagha – a collection of letters, sayings and speeches of Imam Ali
Available online at https://www.al-islam.org or www.duas.org/pdfs/Nahjul-Balagha.pdf

3.The Psalms Of Islam - Al Sahifa Al Sajjadiyya By Imam Ali Zaynul Abidin
Available online at https://www.al-islam.org

4.Morals & Manners of the Holy Imams by Sayyid Zafar Hasan Amrohi
Available online at https://www.al-islam.org .

5. The charter of rights by Imam Ali Zainul abidin
http://www.islamicmobility.com/

6. The Characteristics of Pious (Sermon of Hammam)

https://www.al-islam.org/self-building-ibrahim-amini/characteristics-pious-sermon-hammam

7. The Ahlulbayt (family of the prophet)

https://www.al-islam.org/articles/ahlul-bayt-sayeeda-abid-ali

8. The ethical role models

https://www.al-islam.org/ahlul-bayt-ethical-role-models-sayyid-mahdi-sadr/moral-conduct